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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ATHENS 000063

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL VLADIVOSTOK
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL YEKATERINBURG

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SUBJECT: NATO Air-COM Izmir's Visit to Athens

CLASSIFIED BY: Daniel V. Speckhard, Ambassador; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

1. (C/NF) SUMMARY. Lieutenant General Ralph Jodice (USAF), Commander of NATO's Component Command Air - Izmir (and also dual-hatted in a national role as Commander, 16th Air Expeditionary Task Force, USAF) visited Athens January 13-14, for introductory meetings with Ambassador Speckhard, HAF Chief Lt Gen Vasilios Klokozas, MFA NATO and IO Director General (A/S equivalent) Ambassador Eystathios Lozos, Deputy Chief of Hellenic National Defense Vice Admiral Dimitri Elefsiniotis, and MOD Diplomatic Advisor Dimitri Chronopoulos. In a cordial meeting at MFA DG Lozos expressed Greece's commitment to NATO, but regretted that his primary focus within NATO was Turkey because of Turkish behavior in the Aegean. Looking at the issue of NATO air exercises in the Aegean, Lozos criticized NATO's stated neutrality as a pretext that ultimately served Turkish interests. Lt Gen Jodice, who assumed command December 4, 2009, expressed pleasure at being able to come to Athens early in his tenure and pledged to return, noting he would head to Ankara for similar introductory meetings in a few weeks. He agreed that all Allies should receive fair treatment, and stressed that his travels to Athens and Ankara are to better understand the views of both countries, so that he can best accomplish the mission of his HQ for NATO's Southern Region. Looking back at his November 16 meeting with ASD Vershbow, Lozos also raised Missile Defense, noting its NATO implications and sea-based interceptor requirements for Phase 1. He indicated a desire for further discussions with the U.S. END SUMMARY.

MFA: Not Satisfied with NATO's Stance Toward the Aegean

2. (C/NF) MFA DG Lozos thanked Lt Gen Jodice for coming to Greece so soon after taking command at CC-Air Izmir, stressing Greece's commitment to the Alliance and NATO operations. He characterized Greece's overall military and financial contributions to the spectrum of NATO operations as "midway" among Allies, and stated that the Alliance underestimates Greece's contributions. Turning

to Aegean issues, which have traditionally caused friction between Greece and NATO with CC-Air and its predecessor command "AIRSOUTH" the focal points, he expressed Greece's dissatisfaction with NATO's stance toward Aegean problems. Lozos asserted most of his time working NATO issues is spent trying to alleviate problems caused by Turkey, when he would prefer to concentrate more on the full range of NATO issues. He stated that NATO's policy of neutrality in the Aegean was a pretext that has resulted in an encroachment of Greek sovereignty, as this "Luns Doctrine" has come to exclude portions of Greek territory from NATO defense planning. Lozos also criticized NATO for remaining silent in the face of what he termed "massive" violations by the Turkish Air Force (TUAf) of Greece's Aegean airspace, and TUAf overflights of Greek islands. "We just want fair treatment," he concluded.

13. (C/NF) Lozos complained of Turkish behavior at NATO whereby, he alleged, Turkey tries to use NATO to advance Turkish goals in bilateral relations between Greece and Turkey. He cited the issue of NATO's efforts to unify its air picture over the Aegean -- "Cross Border Connectivity" -- as NATO moves to a more streamlined air command structure as an example. Lozos criticized NATO officials for having the temerity to suggest to Greece that acquiescing to Turkish desires could be a confidence building measure in Greece-Turkish bilateral relations. (Comment: Greece believes its radars should be responsible for the air picture corresponding with the territory of its current ICAO-established Athens Flight Information Region, which includes Greek Aegean

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islands. Our understanding is that Turkey believes a line should be drawn roughly halfway through the Aegean. This longstanding thorn in Greece-Turkey bilateral relations has now snagged a NATO initiative. Turkey has since 1974 disputed the ICAO Athens FIR delineation that was established in the 1950's, and Greece's corresponding claims for search-and-rescue responsibility within the boundaries of the FIR. End comment.) Lozos stated to Lt Gen Jodice that the Greek position cannot be downgraded, as it is an issue of national security.

14. (C/NF) Lt Gen Jodice told Lozos that he agreed all Allies should receive fair treatment, and that he is making an effort to visit Athens and Ankara early in his tenure to understand the views of both countries. Lt Gen Jodice sought to focus Lozos on the strategic imperative that the nations of NATO's southern region work together, and complimented the relationships between the Greek and Turkish officers on his staff. He pledged his objectivity in decision-making, while making clear that not all parties could always be happy with every decision. Citing the importance of resolving the Cross Border Connectivity (CBC) issue in order for CC-Air Izmir to execute its air policing mission effectively, he noted real threats to NATO nations could come from the south of NATO's territory.

Missile Defense - MFA Interested in Discussion

15. (C/NF) Lozos shifted gears at the meeting's conclusion to missile defense. Noting the sea-based Aegis ships of Phase 1 of the PAA, he expressed interest in talking more with the United States about missile defense in Europe, as well as its implications for NATO. COMMENT: Post believes that DG Lozos' late February trip to Washington is an excellent opportunity to program him with missile defense officials at State, the Pentagon, and perhaps NSC. Separate to this, we believe that a one-day stop in Athens by a U.S. missile defense official on a future trip to the region would

be valuable in briefing key Greek interagency officials on developing missile defense plans, with a focus on the role of sea-based interceptors in the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean as well as any releasable information about the Phase 2 basing decisions. Though alternate facilities exist in the Med, the U.S. Naval Support Activity at Souda Bay, Crete stands to play an important logistical role in the support to Aegis Ships operating in the eastern Med. END COMMENT.

MOD Meetings Largely Track MFA, but More Skeptical of NATO

¶6. (C/NF) Lieutenant General Klokozas, Chief HAF, and his staff provided an overview brief of the Hellenic Air Force (HAF), followed by a separate briefing on issues of concern regarding Greece-Turkey tensions in the Aegean Sea. Aircraft track identification, upcoming NATO exercises NEXUS ACE (20-22 JAN) and NOBLE ASPECT, data link operations, Izmir-Standing OPTASK Link (ISOL), Integrated Air Defense System-Izmir (IADS-I), and

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cross-border connectivity were briefed to Lt Gen Jodice. The consistent theme was that each concern was viewed by the HAF as an attempt by Turkey to draw NATO into GR-TU bilateral disagreements. Lt Gen Jodice listened, thanked Lt Gen Klokozas for the input saying that the purpose of his visit was to better understand the issues, and repeated his priority of securing NATO's southern region, noting with concern that the only the gap in NATO radar coverage exists in the Aegean.

¶7. (C/NF) Vice Admiral Elefsiniotis, Deputy CHoD, started his meeting with Lt Gen Jodice by emphasizing that many of the topics they were about to discuss are GR-TU bilateral issues and do not require NATO intervention to resolve; however, he felt it was important to review them with Lt Gen Jodice because of his position as Air-COM Izmir. VADM Elefsiniotis focused on two main points; first the Turkish moves at NATO to draw areas of responsibility (AORs) over the Aegean for Search and Rescue, cross-border connectivity, and data link control. In each AOR, he stated, Turkey divides the Aegean approximately in half, which would result in the inclusion of Greek national territory as well as international territory within Turkish control or administration. Echoing comments from MFA, VADM Elefsiniotis stated this was unacceptable to Greece for reasons of national security. Second, he asked Lt Gen Jodice to ask why NATO exercises operating out of CAOC 6 (in Eskisehir, Turkey) were always in the Aegean, vice a rotational basis between the Black Sea, eastern Med, and Aegean Sea. Lt Gen Jodice thanked the Deputy CHoD for his thoughts and reiterated his focus on security for the NATO southern region.

¶8. (C/NF) The last meeting of the day with MOD Diplomatic Advisor Chronopoulos centered on the NATO command structure in the proposed Flags-to-Post in CAOC Larissa. Chronopoulos summarized that the proposed Turkey-Greece rotation in the Deputy Commander slot at the CAOC was not viable to the Greek parliament, Greek press, Greek people, and ultimately the Greek Government. He recommended a return to the status quo proposal of early 2009 -- specifically a U.S.-Greece rotation in the Deputy position; however, he believed the government would accept any Deputy rotation that did not include a Turkish flag officer. Mr. Chronopoulos recommended Lt Gen Jodice allow countries "room to maneuver" in resolving bilateral issues in the Aegean.

¶9. (C/NF) Comment. All four meetings provided valuable background and understanding of Greek positions on GR-TU relations in the Aegean Sea. Interlocutors were consistent in their message across agencies, with little evident disparity other than attitudes toward NATO. MOD principals recommended NATO stay out of bilateral disputes. MFA DG Lozos agreed that NATO had no right to wade into bilateral issues, and indeed, complained about Turkish efforts to advance bilateral goals at NATO (such as CBC and SAR AORs). However, he implied that NATO had no choice but to become engaged, albeit with any decisions made on the consensus principle, rather than by commanders or civilian policy officials such as the SecGen. End comment.

¶10. (U) This message was cleared by Lt Gen Jodice.
Speckhard